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How the outcasts were taken in

It was Carlton "Zigilee" Constantine who asked the question three years ago: "If the bad boys did not take charge of the pan in the beginning, who would have brought it through?" Nobody, he had explained. "It would have died a natural death." Then he went on to describe some of the things the early pioneers had to undergo to ensure the invention was preserved so that our generation could enjoy it today. "Zigs", founder of one of the earliest steelbands "Bar 20" died last year, but he had lived long enough to see pan through several



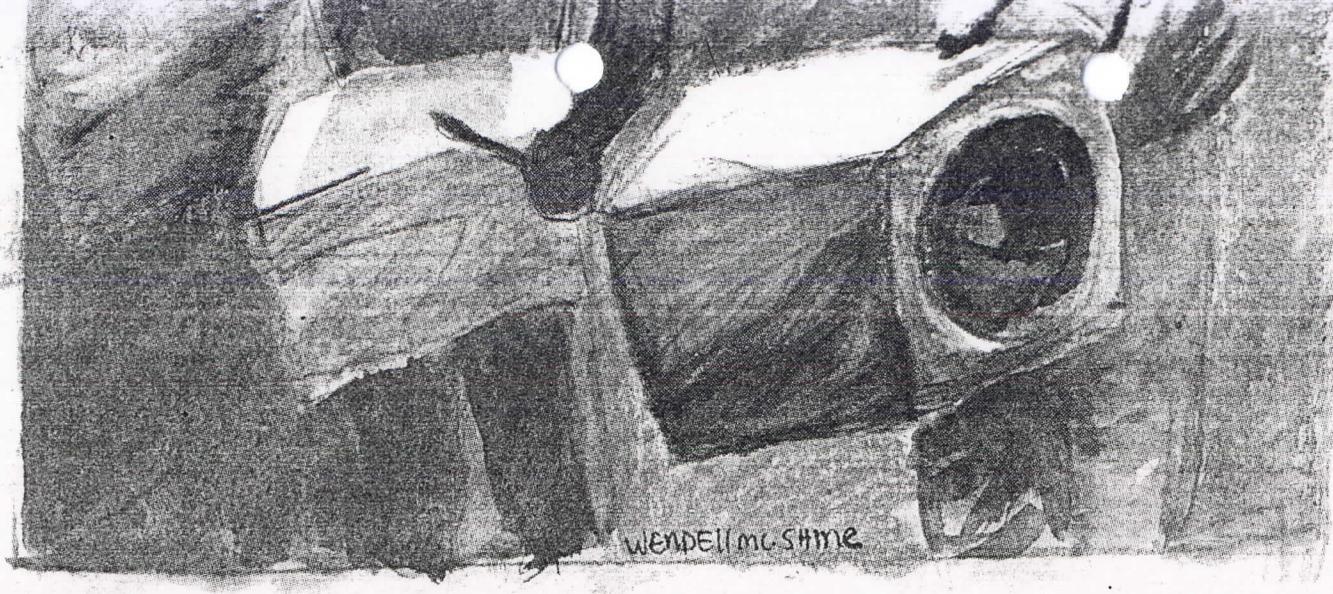
war and Trinidad and Tobago were under Colonial rule, where drums were outlawed. This rule had been a carry over from slavery, where it was believed that the slaves could converse through the drums. To avoid revolts, no two slaves of the same tribe were placed together. Their languages were taken away and the drums forbidden. Anyone found playing a drum was severely whipped, and any slave found making a drum was killed. It is against this background the pan evolved, hence the reason for its early rejection by the majority of the populace. The fact

What started off as something to enhance rhythm has produced the only drum which can play a melody and the sequence of these drums, now placed together can equate any symphony orchestra or jazz band. **One of its greatest heroes, Anthony Williams, who virtually gave up everything for the cause, suffered a nervous breakdown.** Tony was the founder of the spiderweb system, today known as the fourths and fifths, which is to be standard. He also put pans on wheels and got sections together so that when rev-

is probably the only thing which can claim total Trinidad and Tobago heritage...truly a national instrument. There are Trinidadians who have also done many things to enhance the pan. Sherman Fyfe has written two books on how to teach yourself pan and in is the process of writing a third. Cecil "Joker" George of Edmonton, Canada, formerly of Tokyo has invented "panastics" - pan sticks which do not need to be wrapped. George came up with the idea because Canadian members of a band he had formed could not wrap their sticks. It took some effort and

he had lived long enough to see pan through several changes, and up to his death was still active, playing professionally in England. The Badjohn thing became necessary because the players, who had discovered this new instrument back in the late 1930s, had to fight just to play it.

It was just before the second world



on wheels and got sections together so that when revellers got between the pans on the road the players would not be thrown out of focus. As an arranger he was ahead of his time, and in 1964 won the Panorama with "Mama This is Mas", and followed with the victory in the Bomb competition with "Valencia". He was also considered at the time, king of the classics. He was unstoppable. In every aspect Tony Williams was the best.

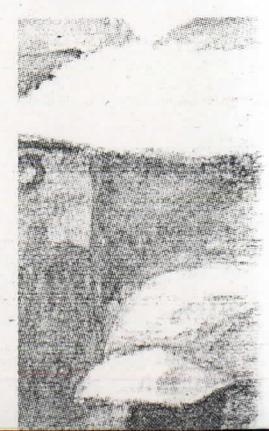
Dem Boys, a bunch of college boys with their base at Lockhart Lane, Belmont, hit the street with "Intercol", an annual football clash between St. Mary's and Queen's Royal Colleges, at the time. The youths had made their statement, showing that pan could be enjoyed by the masses without the hassle and the jostle. Dem Boys followed up with "Viva Zapata" after a movie with Marlon Brando about a Mexican revolutionary, and the breakthrough had been made.

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could not wrap their sticks. It took some effort and experiment to come up with the right combination of rubber and stick, but "panastic" is ready to be marketed. The pan movement enjoys good support in the United States and a bit in Canada. There are old boys clubs of various bands out there, whose members return to Trinidad and Tobago annually for the carnival celebrations. And while most of these will be taken up with the production of mas in their hope of reviving that aspect of the Carnival, quite a few will revel among the various steelbands down the "straight" Sunday. Your effort has not been wasted Tony Williams!

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Some lived and most died, but bands like Dixie Land, Silver Stars, Ebonites, Katzenjammers, Night and Gale, Strumboli, Youth Stars, Sputniks, Symphonettes and Starlift took over the role to take the music to the people. And, because they belonged to the middle class, helped remove the stigma of "outcast" placed on the panmen, who had been captivated by the musical discovery.

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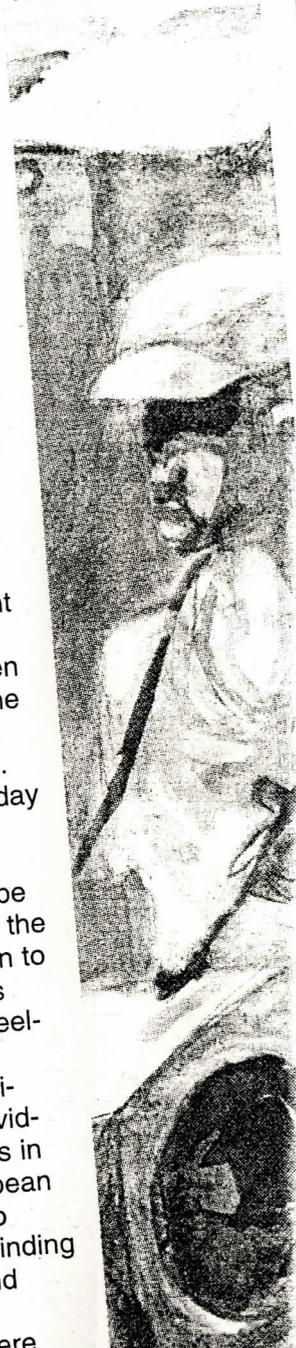
tion that in the 1990s the pan movement are about to standardise a system invented by

Williams more than 30 years ago, you must agree with the conclusion of some that Tony Williams was indeed a scientist. Today, and Sunday when the music comes alive with this year's preliminaries of Panorama competitions, both the traditional and conventional bands, quite a few youngsters will be involved.

This, above all should be encouragement to someone like Williams that the instrument is in good hands. What may be even better could be the expansion of the entire movement. Panorama, one day could become international. Pioneers could be sent throughout the entire Caribbean to start workshops and develop steelbands.

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